

Testimony of: Jeffrey Pfost, Environmental Partners, Inc., Holland, Michigan

Regarding: Michigan SB 939

Date: Thursday, March 8, 2012

Thank you for the opportunity to present my views on the proposed Environmental Leader Legislation. I have been an environmental professional for over 30 years. My business partners and I focus our services on regulatory compliance assistance to organizations and manufacturing firms whose productivity results in inevitable impact on our natural resources and the environment.

The history of environmental regulations has seen a multitude of compliance requirements that are very technically challenging, legally perplexing and often lack the application of common sense. In the early days we relied on a "command and control" approach to pollution reduction. Today open markets and global awareness has brought us to the dawn of topics that include terms such as pollution prevention and beneficial reuse. It is my opinion this bill is timely and friendly to both the environment and business.

At the heart of the bill is a voluntary program that strikes a balance between environmental responsibility and affirmative reporting to the agency. The registration and certification process will help to identify and recognize those organizations for their environmental stewardship and best management practices. Ultimately I predict that knowledge gained through these types of programs will expand our understanding of conservation in its purest form and it will become the norm.

The voluntary nature of the program sets forth an inherent incentive to allow Environmental Leader organizations the ability to determine how best to reduce their impacts. I anticipate the best practices revealed by Environmental Leader organizations will be openly shared between and among competing companies, further raising the "environmental bar." The general public will be the benefactor through cleaner technologies and access to their performance reports through the public record.

Outlined program elements that I believe will assist the effectiveness of the program include:

- 1) Self-reporting
- 2) Voluntary emissions reductions
- 3) Better use of raw materials
- 4) Identification and use of lower emitting alternatives
- 5) More efficient and effective manufacturing processes
- 6) Reduced staff review and inspection times
- 7) Reduced emissions and process wastes
- 8) Internally developed and deployed compliance checks and balances
- 9) Streamlined environmental permits and quicker review and approval times
- 10) Reduced operating costs and
- 11) If approached correctly, higher profitability.

I urge the committee to pass this bill and allow Michigan Companies to be given the opportunity to lead by example. This package may not be the sole answer to solving all of our environmental challenges, but it certainly is a step in the right direction. I believe the Environmental Leader legislation and Senate Bill 939 will allow organizations that have the desire to do better environmentally to become true Environmental Leaders and to become better corporate citizens.

Respectfully submitted:

